

Chapter 5 Conclusion

In Part 1, Chapter 1 gave an overview on regional science, technology, and innovation policies up until now, and Chapters 2 to 4 discussed several good policy examples among those policies.

As described earlier, the regional promotion of science and technology that started in the last quarter century began with the launch of the CLUSTER Policy, in which coordinators were dispatched to regional bases to support the formation of clusters. Through various subsequent stages that include developments in the CLUSTER Policy, the formation of research bases through industry-university-government cooperation, and the creation of a system that allows regions to develop independent science and innovation activities that leverage their strengths and special characteristics, as well as the construction of innovation ecosystems where the above contributes to regional revitalization, and coupled with the strengthening of government initiatives for regional revitalization, the regional promotion of science and technology is steadily expanding.

Furthermore, in order to realize Society 5.0, continuous creation in regional science, technology, and innovation will be pivotal in resolving social issues in autonomous regions and will contribute to the realization of regional revitalization by extension. In addition, as global industrial structures are rapidly shifting from being capital-intensive to knowledge-intensive, regional industrial structures need to do the same. To achieve that kind of transformation, continuous creation in science, technology, and innovation—the wellspring of value creation—is indispensable, and it is vital that we strive toward reconstructing regional industrial structures—which make global value creation possible—through such a

transformation.

Up until now, for example, the development of new technologies and products have contributed to the creation of new industries and employment opportunities unique to local areas, while supporting local primary industries by working toward improvements in productivity and quality in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries. Even in the fields of healthcare and welfare, we are giving back to local residents in the form of high-quality medical services, such as medical care using pioneering, innovative medical equipment and diagnostics based on detailed data, through a social implementation phase.

Despite the steady results being produced along these lines at various regional bases, many regional social and economic issues are complex and difficult, and they continue to evolve with no end in sight. It is difficult to resolve regional issues and create innovation solely from the respective perspectives of knowledge bases such as local universities; local governments that understand their regions' strengths and weaknesses along with other states of affairs; and businesses that offer possible exit strategies. Thus, it is essential that local universities and other similar institutions with exceptional research capabilities, local governments, and industrial sectors cooperate, consider more ideal regional conditions from the perspectives of regional industry-university-government stakeholders and the local residents who have stakes in every one of them, and formulate regional visions imagining futures for their regions that should be worked toward. Furthermore, R&D that leads to new value creation based on backcasting from said regional visions must be systematically promoted under

strengthened industry-university cooperative functions.

Based on the awareness of the above issues, the government compiled the “Comprehensive Promotion Package for Regional Core and Distinctive Research Universities” in February 2022, in which the government makes a concerted effort to support qualified and ambitious universities from the three perspectives of “strengthening university initiatives,” “strengthening linkage systems,” and “promoting university participation in regional societies” to demonstrate the strengths of regional core

universities and world-class universities in specific fields and drive social change. In February 2023, the package was revised to help achieve “quantitative expansion” for further increasing support and “qualitative expansion” for clarifying the university ideal to be worked toward and for strengthening cooperation between the projects of each ministry and agency. We formulated the “Startup Development Five-year Plan” in November 2022, and will strive to strengthen the creation of startups in local areas. Through such initiatives, we hope regional science, technology, and innovation will be further promoted.